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1911

CUPID'S TRICK.

A VALENTINE PLAYLET

BY

PRESTON GIBSON.

Produced at the Play House, February 13, 1911.

Cast of Characters.

SIR ROBERT WYNDHAM.....*Mr. Frederick Webber*

EARL OF CHESTER.....*Mr. John J. Kennedy*

LLEUTENANT JACK FAVARSHAM.....*Mr. Fred Eric*

Leading man with Miss Maud Adams

HELEN WYNDHAM.....*Miss Charlotte Walker*

Owing to sudden illness, Miss Walker is unable to be present. Miss Hicks has kindly consented to play the part.

BARRETT.....*Mr. Wendell Thompson*

Produced under the stage direction of Mr. Preston Gibson.

Synopsis.

PLACE.—Farnsborough, Surrey, England.

SCENE.—Hall in Sir Charles Harcourt's Shooting Lodge.

TIME.—1800. St. Valentine's Day.

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CUPID'S TRICK.

PLACE.—*Farnborough, Surrey, England.*

SCENE.—*The main living hall in Charles Harcourt's castle. Leased by SIR ROBERT WYNDHAM.*

TIME.—*September, 1800. Nine P. M.*

LIGHTS.—*Full up—amber.*

a.m.P., 4 Dec. 1932

(*It is a huge room, having four entrances, R. 2 E., practicable, leading to dining room; L. 3 E., practicable, leading to library; C. D., practicable, two windows, not practicable, one R. of C. D., the other to L. of C. D. Iron bars can be seen through these windows, C. D., is a massive door with a great brass knob, and is the front and main entrance to the house. The ceiling and furniture are of black oak. All the furnishings of the room are red, including curtains, rugs and cushions. There is a large oak table to R. of R. B E., with chairs at either side and a mantel and fireplace at R. 2 E., in which a half dying fire is smouldering. Fine etchings, beautiful vases and rare books abound. There are two lighted single candlesticks at either end of mantel and two on a table near L. 2 E. A tall old-fashioned clock stands at R. of C. D., the hands pointing to nine o'clock. The whole room has an air of refinement, luxury and good taste.*)

CURTAIN RISES.

(*Discovered at rise, SIR ROBERT WYNDHAM. He is a small nervous man of sixty years of age, with*

grey hair and a small grey mustache. Keen little ferret-like eyes and a low forehead. He has rather a piping voice, and a shrill unpleasant laugh. He is avaricious, grasping, and would sell his soul for money. He is dressed in a coat of dark material, black knee breeches, waistcoat, and black silk stockings. He is smoking a pipe and is seated in chair at L. of large carved table near R. 2 E., on which are strewn a great number of papers and a box of tobacco. He is at work arranging them and adding up a sum of figures on a sheet of paper. He appears much worried over his accounts. He rings a bell on the table. Enter BARRETT, R 2 E., dressed in gray coat, knee breeches, black stockings, black facings. SIR ROBERT does not notice him.)

BARRETT. Did you ring, sir?

ROBERT. (*rummaging through papers*) Ring! Ring! Of course I did. Any news from Lord Chester?

BARRETT. I thought I heard a carriage on the drive just now, sir. (*there is a pause, BARRETT looking at SIR ROBERT*)

ROBERT. (*turning on him sharply*) Well, block-head, don't stand there staring at me—go and see who it is.

BARRETT. (*confused*) Yes, sir—— (*Goes up R. and exits rapidly C. D.*)

(SIR ROBERT turns to his papers again. The hands of the clock are at 9.05. A carriage is heard to drive up near C. D. The door C. D. is thrown open by BARRETT, and the EARL OF CHESTER enters C. D. He is very erect, rather handsome, grey hair, and clean shaven, with sharp black eyes, rather unprincipled, though more of a follower than a leader. He is dressed in traveling costume, coat and knee breeches of light material, brown stockings and a brown three cor-

nered hat. About fifty-five years of age. He is followed by BARRETT. He crosses over R. The EARL comes down C. and SIR ROBERT puts down pipe on table, rises slowly and greets him with a hasty handshake)

CHESTER. (*comes down C. and slaps him on the back*) Well, well, Robert, how are you?

ROBERT. (*not rising*) Glad to see you, Chester, glad to see you.

CHESTER. You don't appear to be.

ROBERT. Excuse me, Chester, excuse me. I was thinking——

CHESTER. Don't mind me, I shall make myself at home (*Throws off his cloak to BARRETT. Exit BARRETT R. 2.*)

ROBERT. Of course, of course

CHESTER. (*feeling his shoulder*) You know it is very damp, I am all over dew.

ROBERT. Like my bills.

CHESTER. Tradesmen don't respect you half as much if you pay them promptly.

ROBERT. They must hold me then in very high regard.

CHESTER. Well, you seem to be at home, Robert, quickly settled, let me see, how long have you been here?

ROBERT. Two weeks, Harcourt left everything just as it was. He knew I'd be a good tenant.

CHESTER. And pray, how long do you expect to remain?

ROBERT. (*testily*) I don't know. Have a good trip?

CHESTER. Fair.

ROBERT. Hungry?

CHESTER. (*sits at R. of table*) Yes, and thirsty.

ROBERT. (*rings bell on table*) See anyone you knew on the way?

CHESTER. No.

(*Enter BARRETT, R. 2 E.*)

ROBERT. Some supper for the Earl. (*to CHESTER*) Port?

CHESTER. Yes. Thank you.

ROBERT. (*to BARRETT*) Port, the best.

(*Exit BARRETT, B. 2 E.*)

CHESTER. Well, Robert, you look worried. (*glancing at papers on table*) In trouble?

ROBERT. (*hastily*) Yes, yes, I am, I am. But I believe I see a cure, a cure, Chester. (*Takes up pipe and lights it*)

(*Enter BARRETT with tray and glasses.*)

CHESTER. (*laughing*) A specific, eh? Perchance you may let me prescribe for you?

ROBERT. I believe you will be able to help me, though the prescription is my own.

CHESTER. Oh!

(*BARRETT crosses over R. and passes tray to CHESTER who takes a glass. ROBERT wares it aside in bad humor. CHESTER notices this. BARRETT exits.*)

CHESTER. I haven't tasted Port as good as this for a century.

ROBERT. You won't again in this century, that is the last bottle.

CHESTER. (*looking over his glass*) Feel badly?

ROBERT. (*nervously*) Worried, Chester, worried.

CHESTER. (*tapping glass*) A little of this might make you feel better.

ROBERT. (*waving this idea aside with his hand*) No, business first, Chester.

CHESTER. (*raising his glass*) Well, success to your undertaking, whatever it may be. (*Pause. Drink*) How in the name of Heaven did you happen to lease this place?

ROBERT. It was necessary.

CHESTER. Why did you send for me?

ROBERT. (*blows out smoke nervously*) I'll tell you why I am here instead of in London and why I sent for you.

CHESTER. (*drinks and puts down glass*) Do, I am all attention.

ROBERT. (*rises, goes to R.*) I came because I had to. (*Puts down pipe quickly*)

CHESTER. What do you mean?

ROBERT. (*looking about room to see that no one is within hearing, then leaning across the table*) I am ruined Chester, utterly ruined.

CHESTER. (*rises, astonished*) My God! You don't mean it.

ROBERT. (*hastily*) Yes! Yes! I was caught in the panic. I borrowed, mortgaged my estate and managed pretty well for a time, but when the second crash came it left me homeless, penniless. No one knows this but you, Chester— No one but you. (*excitedly*) But I am not the man to sink under adversity. I shall gain it all back, and more, more. (*his eyes sparkle, he rubs his hands together*) I am determined to be a power, a money power. (*excitedly*) But, I must have money. Money makes money. Chester I must have it. I must have it. (*sinks in chair*)

CHESTER. (*at C.*) What—Would that I might help you, but my affairs are in little better condition than yours.

ROBERT. (*not pleased*) Too bad, too bad.

CHESTER. Egad, man, what are you doing here?

ROBERT. Listen, Chester.

CHESTER. (*in the dark*) Well?

ROBERT. I have a plan, I want your co-operation. I need your aid, and if it turns out well, you will not be the loser.

CHESTER. (*perplexed*) How can I be of assistance?

ROBERT. Wait, I'll tell you.

CHESTER. Go on.

ROBERT. Helen——

CHESTER. (*surprised*) Your daughter?

ROBERT. (*hastily*) Yes, Helen, is the key to the situation. It is on her account I came here and sent for you.

CHESTER. You speak in riddles.

ROBERT. (*excitedly*) Helen must marry immediately—marry a rich man——

CHESTER. (*at c.*) Rich man? That's a good idea. (*pause*) A capital idea—if the rich man likes it. Have you anyone in view?

ROBERT. Yes, Lieutenant Osborne. (*rises*) I brought her here, hoping to arrange a match with him, Osborne, he's living here now.

CHESTER. Well?

ROBERT. His father died a short time ago and left him vast estates. He is the wealthiest young man in Surrey—a fine catch.

CHESTER. Indeed?

ROBERT. I sent for you to help me bring this about. Helen is very fond of you and you can exert your influence in the right direction.

CHESTER. It will be a pleasure, Robert. What kind of a fellow is he?

ROBERT. (*both at c.*) I don't know, but that makes no difference. I am not going to marry him.

CHESTER. Have you ever seen him?

ROBERT. No, but I hear he is young and handsome. Will you help me?

CHESTER. By all means.

ROBERT. (*up c.*) Good! Good! (*his eyes glistening*) Now to business. General Foreythe is going to bring young Lieutenant Osborne to call on us to-morrow when Helen will meet him for the first time, after he goes see to it that you sing his praises.

CHESTER. I shall do all I can to help that matter along. Of course we can tell better how the land lies after she meets him and we know whether her first impressions are good or bad.

ROBERT. They are not likely to be good as I have never succeeded in getting that young jack-a-knapes Lieutenant Favarsham out of her head.

CHESTER. (*down R. to sofa*) By King George, Jack Favarsham was attractive, so she still thinks of him? (*sits on sofa*)

ROBERT. He was so constantly in her mind that I had to finally forbid her mentioning his name. These worthless fellows have a way with women.

(BARRETT *enters R. 1, exits C.*)

CHESTER. Did you allow him to come to your house in town?

ROBERT. (*down C.*) I should say not, but I am quite sure she met the fellow in the Park, at least so I was informed. You know I have never even so much as seen Favarsham.

CHESTER. Really? You have never seen him. Well, he is very good to look at.

ROBERT. That may be Chester, but he was poor, lamentably poor.

CHESTER. He is going to inherit money from Mrs. Favarsham, an old aunt who lives at Aldershot.

ROBERT. Near here?

CHESTER. Just a few miles, this old lady has an immense fortune and she gives her nephew nothing, I understand at her death he succeeds to all her wealth.

ROBERT. If Helen speaks to you of this worthless Favarsham tell her she must not think of the fellow, you know what to say to her?

(*Enter BARRETT C. with a note and CHESTER's port-manteau.*)

CHESTER. Trust me Robert.

BARRETT. Pardon me sir, I found this on the door step after Lord Chester arrived. I thought he might have lost it, sir.

(SIR ROBERT takes envelop and hands it to EARL CHESTER who looks at it. Exit BARRETT R. 2 E.)

CHESTER. (*rise, opens envelop, takes out note and after reading it, exclaims*) A love note! (*Hands it to SIR ROBERT*)

ROBERT. (*reading it over*) Zounds! Who could have lost this?

CHESTER. (*smiling*) Helen?

ROBERT. (*greatly disturbed*) It isn't probable.

CHESTER. Perhaps you haven't kept your eyes sufficiently open. (*pointing at note*) Read it again.

ROBERT. (*reading near table*) Will be at your front door at ten to-night. One word, one glimpse will repay me. If by any ill luck I should run into your father. I will say I am a stranger and have come to him for aid. Signed Lieutenant. (*laughs shrilly*)

CHESTER. (*glancing hurriedly at clock. The hands are at 9.20*) It's nine-twenty now. Ten did he say?

ROBERT. Yes. (*repeating half to himself*) Lieutenant! Lieutenant! Gad. (*slaps table*) Lieutenant Osborne perchance. 'Tis signed Lieutenant——

CHESTER. Who knows? He may have seen her and is smitten already.

ROBERT. (*excited*) If it were so. Gad! What luck it would be.

CHESTER. Where is the lassie?

ROBERT. I haven't seen her since dinner. Come, your supper will be cold. (*leads way out R.*) I'll see what she has to say to the note. Come, come.

CHESTER. Very well, Sir Robert.

(*Exeunt ROBERT and CHESTER R. 2. Enter HELEN L. 3 E.* HELEN is a tall extremely pretty girl of eighteen years, with large dark eyes, a mass of brown hair and a good figure. She is dressed in becoming costume and has a great deal of

style. She comes in hurriedly, is apparently much worried, crosses over R. and searches the floor with her eyes, looking for something she has lost. Not seeing it she goes up R. to C. D. and opens the door, steps out on the door step and looks about on the ground. The full moon can be seen through the open door. Enter SIR ROBERT R. 2 E. He holds the note in his right hand behind his back. HELEN steps within the room at this instant and quickly pulls the door too. He turns and sees her. She is confused. His tone is severe.

ROBERT. (at R. C. sternly) Come here.

(HELEN comes down C. towards him rather frightened.)

ROBERT. (glancing quickly at her and handing her the crumpled piece of paper. Pointing to note) Explain?

HELEN. (glances at it and starts as she recognizes the writing) Oh!

ROBERT. (in a nasty tone) Familiar, ch?

HELEN. (confused) Yes—I—have—seen—the writing—before.

ROBERT. (fuming) Zounds. So you've been having a secret correspondence with the fellow. A pretty pass for my daughter to come to and with a Lieutenant. Could you get no one of high rank to intrigue with you?

HELEN. You judge me too quickly.

ROBERT. Am I blind? Can I not read? (*pointing to note*) Were I deaf and it (*pointing to note*) were read to me it would affect a cure. Read? Read aloud, that I may test my senses.

HELEN. (*pleading*) Father!

ROBERT. (*severely*) Read!

HELEN. (*reads*) I will be at your front door at

ten to-night. One word, one glimpse will repay me. If by any ill luck I should run into your father I will say I am a stranger and have come to him for aid, Lieutenant.

ROBERT. (*shrilly*) It is clear, my daughter?

HELEN. (*quietly*) Very.

ROBERT. Who is the fellow and how came you to know him?

HELEN. (*against table. Off-handedly*) I have met him riding, driving, and walking—in short, wherever I go I see him.

ROBERT. (*hotly*) Impudent rascal.

HELEN. He has written me several notes. I have never answered any of them. Coming out of church this afternoon he put this (*pointing to note*) into my hand.

ROBERT. (*sarcastically*) Love at first sight, eh? What's his name?

HELEN. He signed himself Harry Osborne once.

ROBERT. (*surprised*) Harry Osborne? (*delighted*) Then it is Lieutenant Osborne.

HELEN. I suppose so.

ROBERT. (*his tone immediately changing to her surprise*) He is a very estimable young man. You could not have chosen a more gallant gentleman to flirt with. Do you love him?

HELEN. (*laughing*) Love him? No! I loved one man, but you——

ROBERT. (*angrily*) Do you refer to that penniless rascal, Jack Favarsham?

HELEN. (*her eyes sparkling, her face beaming*) Yes. I really loved him. I love him now.

ROBERT. (*snapping his fingers*) Pooh.

HELEN. (*turns and speaks, standing up for him*) You've never seen Jack?

ROBERT. (*sharply*) I have no desire to. (*returning quickly to the point*) Is not Osborne handsome?

HELEN. Have you ever seen him?

ROBERT. Never.

HELEN. He is medium, where Jack is tall. I like him. (*with toss of her head*) But I adore Jack.

ROBERT. (*up and down c.*) Get the penniless rascal out of your head, child, for I have decided on a husband for you.

HELEN. (*against sofa, astonished*) Husband for me? (*horrified*) Marry? (*gasping*) Father.

ROBERT. (*from up c., sharply*) I have selected a man for you.

HELEN. (*on her dignity*) Who pray?

ROBERT. (*down to her, speak. At L. of table*) Your ardent admirer, Lieutenant Osborne.

HELEN. Lieutenant Osborne?

ROBERT. Yes.

HELEN. (*at c.*) I thought you said you had never seen him.

ROBERT. (*at c.*) Oh! Ahem! True! But I do not have to see a man to know all about him. I knew his father. Osborne is a fine fellow.

HELEN. (*comes nearer him*) I dare say—but I do not love him.

ROBERT. (*testily*) My child, that makes no difference. Love is a poor thing at best. We can get along without love, but money is a necessity.

HELEN. (*perplexed*) Money? Oh! Father, you wouldn't have me marry a man I don't love?

ROBERT. Why not? Gad, if you don't love him and he turns out badly then you have no sorrow, but if you do love him and he's a bad lot it breaks your heart.

HELEN. (*crosses her arms firmly*) I do not love Lieutenant Osborne and I won't marry him!

ROBERT. (*astounded*) Can I believe my ears. Won't marry him, say you? Odd's life! Girl, have you lost your reason? (*angrily*) Have I devoted those last eighteen years since your mother died to you, our only daughter and now you turn on me? Is this your gratitude?

HELEN. (*soothingly*) I simply can't marry a man I don't love. Oh! Think what you ask!

ROBERT. (*sharply*) I ask no more than is my due. We are heavily in debt——

HELEN. (*half screaming*) I see! I see! Money! Debt! (*up to mantel*)

ROBERT. Well?

HELEN. (*at mantel at R. C. In a far away tone*) So you propose to sell me to pay your debts, sell me?

ROBERT. Eh!

HELEN. (*horrified*) I see now. Why you whisked me off before Jack and I could— Lieutenant Osborne is rich—(*her voice breaking*) I see, I see.

ROBERT. We are in debt, but that is not, the reason.

HELEN. If Jack were only rich.

ROBERT. (*sharply*) Gad! Child. Favarsham's married ere this. (*sneeringly*)

HELEN. (*at C. Her pride touched*) He is not married, sir. He loved me too well.

ROBERT. (*quickly*) Enough of him—roving adventurer. (*glancing at clock*) Your future husband.

HELEN. (*at C., surprised*) Future husband?

ROBERT. (*at L. near table, sternly*) He will be here, if he is on time, in thirty minutes. Go and prepare to meet him.

HELEN. (*pleadingly*) Father!

ROBERT. (*sharply*) You are acquainted with our circumstances. Will you be a prop to your father in his old age, or will you leave him, weighted down by debts and oppressed by creditors to die alone. (*sits at R. of table*)

(EARL OF CHESTER *enters R. 2.*)

HELEN. (*sees him, her face lights up, and she crosses hastily over R. near him. Enthusiastically shaking his hand*) Oh, Lord Chester, I'm so glad,

so glad to see you. Father said you were coming to pay us a visit.

CHESTER. (*shaking her hand warmly*) Helen, I am glad to see you.

HELEN. (*distracted going close to and looking up at him*) Won't you advise me—I am in great trouble? I don't know what to do—which way to turn.

CHESTER. What is it all about?

HELEN. Father——

ROBERT. (*coldly*) I've selected a man whom I wish her to marry and she rebels. What say you?

HELEN. (*clinging to a last hope*) Tell me what to do. I don't love this man. (*pleadingly*) What would you advise.

CHESTER. (*exchanging glances with SIR ROBERT*) It is always best in the long run to obey your father, my dear. He knows best. Though at first it may not seem so to you, in the end you will find that he was right.

HELEN. (*her voice broken*) You were my last prop, and now that has been taken away. (*collecting herself. Crosses over to ROBERT*) I will see him but I do not promise anything. You shall have my answer to-night.

(*Exit HELEN L. 3.*)

ROBERT. Now for my plan, Chester.

CHESTER. What are you going to do?

ROBERT. I am going to have Barrett remove the knob from the door on the inside. Fix the lock so that it will catch.

CHESTER. Why?

ROBERT. When Osborne comes he will find all lights out, doubtless try the door, it will open, he will come in, and it will close on him. He will not be able to get out then I shall appear, demand to know what he is doing in my house and insist that he

marry my daughter, so you see Chester I have him, I have him——

CHESTER. It is a splendid idea. It can't fail.
(rings bell on table)

ROBERT. We will soon be out of debt.

CHESTER. What a load will be lifted from my mind and from the minds of my creditors.

(Enter BARRETT R. 2.)

ROBERT. Barrett remove the handle and the knob from the door on this side and fix the lock so it will catch. (points to C. D.) Put out lights in this room.

BARRETT. Very good, sir.

(Exit BARRETT R. 2.)

ROBERT. (takes up candelabra). Come up to the sitting room, Chester,—I'll tell you more of my plan.

CHESTER. Gad, I see what you're driving at, already. (they exeunt L. 3. Enter BARRETT R. 2. He has a screwdriver. He goes up C. D. immediately goes to work, and in a few moments he has removed the knob from the door and holds it up to his hand.)

BARRETT. What's up, I wonder? The governor must be losing his mind? I 'ate to think so yet. Why should 'e come to this blooming place—only for a few weeks says 'e. Now, 'e wants the knob taken off the door I'll bet sixpence 'o'll 'ave the roof taken off the 'ouse to-morrow. (laughs)

(BARRETT takes up candelabra, crosses over R. Exits R. 2 E. Lights out. A moment elapses. There is a gentle knock at C. D., an interval, another knock, then the door, C. D., opens and JACK FAVARSHAM puts his head through the door. He is an extremely handsome young fellow and most attractive in appearance. Clean shaven, age 26, dressed in buckskin breeches, red waist coat, black boots, light brown coat, black tie, ruffles, cravat, and carried under his left arm a black three cornered hat

edged with ostrich down and in his hand a riding whip. He is of the dare-devil type of young gallant of the period. Seeing no one present he pushes the door inward and enters, removing his hand from the door. On the instant it swings too and the lock is heard to catch. JACK startled and surprised, turns and reaches for the knob to open the door. Not finding any he runs his hands quickly over the door, but can find nothing to catch hold of. He puts his whip in his boot, draws his sword and tries to pry it open, but to no avail, rushes to window. Exclaims "Barred." Goes to C. D. He turns, puts his back to the door, and looks about him. Comes forward rather cautiously, trying to distinguish in the darkness the nature of his surroundings. He has not long to wait, for in another moment a light appears at L. 3 E. and SIR ROBERT WYNDHAM enters L. C., holding a massive silver candelabra in his hand. Lights up, amber. The young man stands near C. D. with drawn sword and watches him. SIR ROBERT glancing out of the corner of his eyes, sees JACK and crosses over R. to the mantel. He puts the candelabra upon the mantel, then turning and smiling towards JACK, he says, very graciously.)

ROBERT. You are welcome, sir. (*glances at clock the hands are at 9.40*) Though a trifle ahead of time. Pray, throw aside your cloak, draw up a chair and try some of my boasted tobacco. (*pushes toward him a box of tobacco. JACK politely shakes his head*)

JACK. (*letting his sword drop into its scabbard and bowing, crosses over R.*) "Ahead of time? I don't quite understand. Pardon me, sir, I am a stranger. (*SIR ROBERT laughs*) My horse got the better of me at your gate and left me unhurt, though dusty by the roadside, so I ventured upon your

hospitality to direct me to the nearest inn for the night.

ROBERT. (*half to himself*) If I meet your father. I will say I am a stranger in need of aid. (*sits at L. of table*)

JACK. Eh?

ROBERT. I was thinking which place would be the best for you, but on second thought, why don't you let this house be your inn?

JACK. (*going up towards C. D.*) I would that I might, sir, and I thank you but I must be on my way early in the morning. (*as he reaches door*) Will you be good enough to instruct me how to open your door, I fear the task is too complicated for me alone.

ROBERT. (*smiling*) Sit down my boy—there is no need of haste. (*sits at L. of table near R. 2 E. Takes up his pipe and lights it*) Rings bell.

JACK. (*near C. D., firmly*) I must be on my way, sir.

ROBERT. (*annoyed, blowing smoke about*) Fie! Be seated—I know your errand, knave.

(*Enter BARRETT R. 1 with light. Puts candelabra down, lights up full. Exit BARRETT R. 1.*)

JACK. (*surprised*) Errand? (*laughs*) Of course you do—I've told you. (*SIR ROBERT laughs a shrill laugh. JACK comes down C. not pleased*) Sir, you appear to doubt me. (*firmly*) Open the door, sir.

ROBERT. (*rises at C., coolly*) Calm yourself, calm yourself, my boy. I am not wrath with you. Gad, I intend that you shall see her, aye marry her.

JACK. (*overcome*) See her? Marry her? Are you mad, sir? (*SIR ROBERT lights his pipe. Growing excited*) Why am I prevented from leaving this house. What devil's curse is on that door that it is divested of its proper use? Are you highwaymen?

Or madmen? (*drawing his sword, going up c., flourishing it*) Open the door, sir, or damn me if I won't break it down.

ROBERT. (*coolly*) Put up your sword, sir. To answer your flood of questions my head must be of such proportions as Ferrau's one of brass. (*puffs his pipe*)

JACK. (*disarmed for the moment by SIR ROBERT'S coolness*) Think you to keep me prisoner?

ROBERT. (*amused*) I shall not try your patience long. She will be here within a few minutes to greet you.

JACK. (*perplexed*) She? She? I repeat, sir, there is some dreadful mistake.

ROBERT. (*angrily, putting his pipe on table*) Let me be a judge of that, sir. Gad, where are your eyes? Can you not see I favor your suit? (*down to table*)

JACK. She? Suit? (*laughs*) That's good. (*taps forehead*) It's a madhouse. He is crazy. She? Of course, I understand, yes, I will marry her.

ROBERT. (*advances toward him*) You will, my boy, you will?

JACK. (*backing away from him*) Yes, I will do anything if you will only let me out, who are you, sir, some king, no doubt. (*tapping his forehead*)

ROBERT. (*making fun*) Who else, do I resemble but George the Fourth.

JACK. I suppose you have a great many kings and queens here.

ROBERT. We are overrun with them, sir, but I know only one lady interests you and I favor your suit.

JACK. Thanks, thanks, I am glad you favor me. (*looks about for means of escape*) I should like to see your majesty's garden. (*starts up*)

ROBERT. Wait till you see her. Oh, you young rascal I knew you were lying. I saw the note you wrote to my daughter.

JACK. (*towards him*) Indeed, did you? (*looking for means of escape*)

ROBERT. Aye! But I am not easily deceived.

(*A rustle of skirts is heard. Enter HELEN L. 3 E. She is dressed in a simple dress with her hair pompadoured, waved and caught in a large knot at the neck. SIR ROBERT crosses over L. to meet his daughter. She looks up at him pleadingly. Both near L. 3 E.*)

HELEN. Is it true that you've said, father, about your debts?

ROBERT. Yes, my dear. (*he offers his hand and points to JACK, but she passes him and crosses over R. towards JACK, who stands with his back to her as he hears her*) Lieutenant Osborne, my daughter. (*goes to door*)

(*As she turns she nears him, he bows, not raising his eyes. As he straightens himself she looks at him and he at her, their eyes meet, her cheeks become scarlet, then white, and scarlet again her breast heaves, her eyes open wide, her breath comes quickly. He gazes speechless, in wonder and love.*)

HELEN. (*exclaims*) Jack!

(*He crushes her in his arms. ROBERT turns and comes forward. Enter CHESTER L. 3.*)

ROBERT. Eh? What's this? What's this, Jack? (*advancing upon them*) Jack? (*threatening*) Are you not Lieutenant Osborne, sir?

JACK. (*laughing with one arm about HELEN*) I am called Lieutenant John Favarsham—by some, Jack.

ROBERT. (*advancing angrily upon him*) Zounds! —Villain!

JACK. (*holding her in his left arm and thrusting*

his sword with his right, close to him) You can have no reason to object to me now, sir. Aunt Favarsham is dead.

ROBERT. (*his manner changing perceptibly, laughs shrilly*) Come, Chester, let's finish that Port. Cupid's played a trick on me.

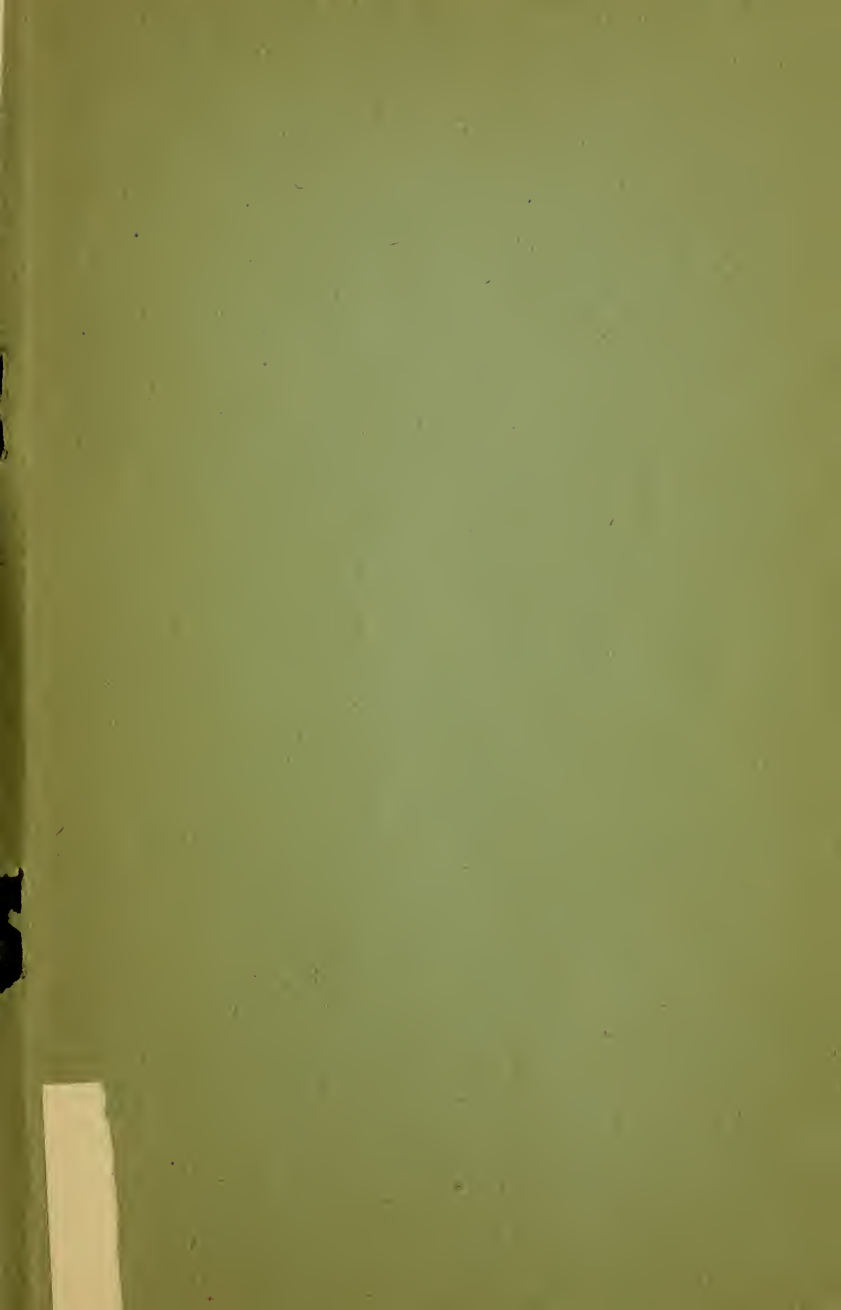
JACK. (*holds her at arm's length, taking her all in. She blushes and looks down as he gazes at her in speechless admiration and delight. He draws her into his arms. Whispers ardently*) "Helen"!

HELEN. (*whispers*) Jack!

(*The hands of the clock are at 9.50.*)

CURTAIN.

JUN 3 1911



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